What is claimed is:

1. A satellite modem, comprising

a housing;

a antenna for receiving and transmitting radio frequency (RF) signals;

an upconverter/downconverter coupled to said antenna and adapted to upconvert RF signals from a first frequency band to a second frequency band, and adapted to downconvert RF signals from said second frequency band to said first frequency band;

an RF transceiver coupled to said upconverter/downconverter and adapted to receive an output transmit signal and to generate an output RF signal therefrom, said RF transceiver adapted to receive an input RF signal from said upconverter/downconverter and generate an input receive signal therefrom;

an intermediate frequency (IF) module adapted to receive said input receive signal and generate I and Q signals in response thereto;

a baseband module adapted to receive said I and Q signals and to generate receive data in accordance therewith; and

a baseband module adapted to generate said output transmit signal in accordance with a transmit data signal input thereto.

2. A receiver baseband apparatus, comprising:

input means adapted to receive an I and Q signal;

a first matched filter adapted to receive said I signal and generate an I filtered output therefrom;

a second matched filter adapted to receive said Q signal and generate a Q filtered output therefrom;

a processor programmed to perform the steps of:

detecting the presence of signal activity as input to said receiver baseband apparatus;

acquiring said signal once it is detected;

pre-tracking said signal once it is detected;

tracking said signal once it is detected;

a decoder adapted to receive said I output signal and said Q output signal from said processor and to generate a decoded output therefrom;

a deinterleaver adapted to generate a deinterleaved output in accordance with said decoded output signal input thereto;

a forward error correction decoder adapted to generate output receive data in accordance with said deinterleaved output signal input thereto; and

a controller adapted to manage and control said input means, first matched filter, second matched filter, said processor, said decoder, said deinterleaver and said forward error correction decoder.

3. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said step of detecting the presence of signal activity comprises the steps of:

performing initial automatic gain control (AGC) on said signal;

performing signal decimation; and

performing signal detection and frequency acquisition.

SUBA7 4. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said step of acquiring said signal comprises the steps of:

inputting said signal to a first matched filter;

performing a first automatic gain control (AGC) acquisition;

performing timing acquisition;

inputting said signal to a second matched filter;

performing a second automatic gain control (AGC) acquisition;

performing fine frequency estimation; and

performing phase acquisition.

5. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said step of acquiring said signal comprises the step of performing coarse phase acquisition on said signal, wherein said step of performing coarse phase acquisition comprises the steps of:

rotating vectors z_n representing said signal into a single quadrant by an angle Θ_k;

wiping off said $z_n(\Theta_k)$ modulation;

summing the wiped off vectors $z_n(\Theta_k)$;

determining the energy contained within a plurality of hypotheses; and

selecting a single hypothesis from said plurality of hypotheses having the maximum energy.

6. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said step of pre-tracking comprises the steps of:

inputting said signal to a matched filter;

performing automatic gain control (AGC) tracking;

performing timing tracking;

performing phase tracking;

generating I and Q soft decisions; and

determining whether signal lock has been achieved.

7. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said step of pre-tracking comprises the steps of performing timing acquisition on K groups, each made up of N DFT estimates, each estimate calculated from blocks of 16 symbols, said step of performing timing acquisition comprising the steps of:

calculating a timing estimate t_i based on a DFT for 16 contiguous symbols, $i = 1,..,N$, thereby obtaining N DFT estimates each based on a block of symbols;

generating a histogram of said N DFT estimates t_i;

classifying a timing range said group the N estimates are in based on said histogram;

unwrapping said N DFT estimates and calculating their average T_i; and

unwrapping K average estimates T_i and performing a least square fit of said K averages so as to generate a final estimate.

8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said decoder comprises a Viterbi decoder.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said upconverter/downconverter is adapted to upconvert an L band signal to a C or Ku band signal.

10. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said upconverter/downconverter is adapted to downconvert a C or Ku band signal to an L band signal.

11. A receiver baseband apparatus, comprising:

input means adapted to receive an I and Q signal;

an I matched filter adapted to receive said I signal and generate an I filtered output therefrom;

a Q matched filter adapted to receive said Q signal and generate a Q filtered output therefrom;

a processor programmed to:

perform automatic gain control (AGC) and generate an AG control signal therefrom;

perform timing detection and generate an A/D clock control signal therefrom;

perform phase detection and generate a voltage controlled oscillator (VCO) control signal therefrom;

a decoder adapted to receive said I output signal and said Q output signal from said processor and to generate a decoded output therefrom;

a deinterleaver adapted to generate a deinterleaved output in accordance with said decoded output signal input thereto;

a forward error correction decoder adapted to generate output receive data in accordance with said deinterleaved output signal input thereto; and

a controller adapted to manage and control said input means, I matched filter, Q matched filter, said processor, said decoder, said deinterleaver and said forward error correction decoder.

12. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said step of detecting the presence of signal activity comprises the steps of:

performing initial automatic gain control (AGC) on said signal;

performing signal decimation; and

performing signal detection and frequency acquisition.

13. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said step of acquiring said signal comprises the steps of:

inputting said signal to a first matched filter;

performing a first automatic gain control (AGC) acquisition;

performing timing acquisition;

inputting said signal to a second matched filter;

performing a second automatic gain control (AGC) acquisition;

performing fine frequency estimation; and

performing phase acquisition.

14. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said step of acquiring said signal comprises the step of performing coarse phase acquisition on said signal, wherein said step of performing coarse phase acquisition comprises the steps of:

rotating vectors z_n representing said signal into a single quadrant by an angle Θ_k;

wiping off said $z_n(\Theta_k)$ modulation;

summing the wiped off vectors $z_n(\Theta_k)$;

determining the energy contained within a plurality of hypotheses; and

selecting a single hypothesis from said plurality of hypotheses having the maximum energy.

15. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said step of pre-tracking comprises the steps of:

inputting said signal to a matched filter;

performing automatic gain control (AGC) tracking;

performing timing tracking;

performing phase tracking;

generating I and Q soft decisions; and

determining whether signal lock has been achieved.

16. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said step of pre-tracking comprises the steps of performing timing acquisition on K groups, each made up of N DFT estimates, each estimate calculated from blocks of 16 symbols, said step of performing timing acquisition comprising the steps of:

calculating a timing estimate t_i based on a DFT for 16 contiguous symbols, $i = 1,..,N$, thereby obtaining N DFT estimates each based on a block of symbols;

generating a histogram of said N DFT estimates t_i;

classifying a timing range said group the N estimates are in based on said histogram;

unwrapping said N DFT estimates and calculating their average T_i; and

unwrapping K average estimates T_i and performing a least square fit of said K averages so as to generate a final estimate.